

BELONGING CULTURE

Creating Safe Space - The Brain Science of Belonging

ESTIMATED TIME REQUIRED



110 minutes

OVERVIEW

This training session highlights the brain science that informs our human need to seek spaces and environments that foster belonging. In this session, your service year corps members will be guided through the parts of the brain in order to understand the human need for belonging.

LEARNING OUTCOMES



By the end of this session, your corps members will be able to:

- Understand the importance of inclusive spaces that foster a belonging environment
- Understand the differences and similarities of their personal and collective values
- Identify and reflect on identities and factors that influence and shape identities

TRAINING SESSION RESOURCES

Before getting started with this training session, you should review the Preparation section below as well as familiarize yourself with this guide's Session Script. This session should be presented directly to corps members using this downloadable presentation:

- **Downloadable Presentation:** [B2: Training Session: Creating Safe Space - The Brain Science of Belonging](#)

The downloadable presentation includes speaker notes for program staff who are facilitating this session directly to corps members, making it easy for staff to walk through the presentations efficiently and effectively.

PREPARATION

Trainer Expectations

Throughout this training session, trainers will be asked to facilitate the group through small group discussions and full group discussions. Some of the topics may feel challenging for your corps members to engage with, and they may not want to engage in conversations on these topics at first. Part of fostering a belonging environment is making the space equal with corps members and program staff. Therefore, we recommend you, as the facilitator, prepare responses to the questions posed to the corps members throughout the session as a strategy to help spark conversation if needed. Before beginning this session, review the Session Outline & Script below and ensure familiarity with the content to be prepared to facilitate activities and answer potential questions from corps members. You'll notice in the Session Outline there are resources linked to provide background on the subject matters included in this training.

	TIME ESTIMATE
	LEARNING OUTCOMES
	VIRTUAL MODIFICATION
	ACTIVITY
	HELPFUL TIP

Necessary Materials

- Distribute pen and paper for your service year corps members to take notes
- One printed copy for each corps member:
 - 20 Specific Actions Worksheet ([B2: Resource: 20 Specific Actions That Make Relationships Powerful](#))
 - [B0: Glossary](#)

Virtual Modifications

If you plan to facilitate the training session in a virtual environment, we recommend the following modifications:

- Use a whiteboard that can be displayed on camera or share your screen and work in a word or google document
- If you have group break out sessions, set up the groups in advance via your video conferencing software
- Don't forget to send an email with any necessary handouts in advance of your remote session

SESSION OUTLINE

The following outline walks you through what to expect throughout this session and how to prepare.

I. Creating Safe Space

In this section you introduce the topic for this Belonging session, set a lens for the conversation, and provide tips for engaging throughout the session. You will also distribute the [B0: Glossary](#).

II. Human First Approach

In this section you will introduce the concept that doing the work to create a safe space for humans involves understanding that relationship building is foundational to this work. You will introduce the Safety Pyramid.

III. Brain Science of Belonging

In this section you will discuss the role the brain plays in seeking safety. You will introduce the three regions of the brain and how they work.

ACTIVITY: Cultural Responsiveness and the Brain - small & full group discussion



IV. Adult Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

In this section you will discuss Adult Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and its relationship with belonging. You will start by guiding the group through understanding how our learning centers develop from our youth.

Preparation needed: Youth Centered Approach to How We Learn - You will introduce the [Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory](#) to explore how humans learn.

ACTIVITY: Creating Safe Spaces - full group discussion



V. Developmental Relationships

In this section you will introduce the Developmental Relationships Framework - five elements, expressed in 20 specific actions, that make relationships powerful in a young person's life.

ACTIVITY: Developmental Relationships Framework - worksheet



- You will prompt corps members to review the B2: Resource: 20 Specific Actions That Make Relationships Powerful and complete the worksheet

ACTIVITY: Reflecting on Relationships - small group discussion



VI. Close out

You will lead a close out by summarizing how these learnings allow each of us to be part of creating a safe space. You will then encourage corps members to journal about the overall theme of this session.

SESSION SCRIPT

The following script should be used for presenting this session directly to your corps members. It is recommended that you review this script before beginning the session. *Italicized prompts* are intended to be guidance for you as the trainer rather than part of the script you will communicate to your corps members.

Slide #1

Welcome to our second training session – Creating Safe Space: The Brain Science of Belonging. Today we will work together to:

- Understand the importance of inclusive spaces that foster a belonging environment
- Understand the differences and similarities of personal and collective values
- Identify and reflect on identities and factors that influence and shape identities
- Distribute the [B0: Glossary](#) to your service year corps members and have them review the key terms for the Session B2 so they are able to become familiar with the terminology used throughout the session.

Slide #2

Our agenda for today is to:

- To review the lens for our session and how to engage with the session material.
- Then we'll discuss creating safe spaces for humans.
- We'll cover the Brain Science of Belonging & the 3 Areas of the Brain.
- Then we'll take a quick break before we dive into Adult Social and Emotional Learning (SEL).
- Finally, we'll discuss Developmental Relationships.
- Then we'll debrief and wrap up.

Slide #3

Today we are going to talk about a lot of big concepts. We'll discover how an understanding of these key concepts can help foster safe, trauma-reducing, and healing organized spaces for you, your fellow corps members, and the communities we serve. Finally, we'll review best practices for strengthening relationships with your fellow corps members.

Slide #4

We'll start our conversation the same way as others in this belonging curriculum - with suggestions for how to engage with today's content:

- Take note of terms and concepts that resonate with you during the workshop. These can be reviewed later for further reflection today and throughout the year.
- Consider your lived experiences and how they influence your understanding of the social identities we will be discussing today.
- Stay open. Some of the information we share might challenge your ideas around belonging and safety and that's okay. If we all stay open, then we can hold the container together.
- If you are more knowledgeable on this topic, challenge yourself to do some deeper reflection.
- There is always room to learn and grow. We are all a work in progress.

Any questions? Let's get started.

Slide #5

When we talk about creating safe spaces for humans, I think it's essential that we acknowledge that each of us in this space are human first. Acknowledging our shared humanity, as we will discover in this session, calls us to recognize that it's imperative to understand how to build positive social relationships that signal to the brain a sense of physical, psychological, and social safety so that learning is possible. If we want to create spaces and experiences that are centered in belonging, we must put our focus on relationships.

We are going to go through a couple foundation pieces. Please ask questions as we go along if you have them.

Slide #6

Doing the work of creating safe space for humans involves understanding that relationship building is the foundation of this work. We must first accept that we are all human beings, then we must discover how to engage with others within your context. Doing this with fidelity means we will have to be intentional with how we cultivate these relationships.

The next slides will set up the difference between the relationship with "me," "we," and "us." This session is about understanding the brain science behind relationships and creating safe spaces together. It is imperative to understand how the individual, or "me" shows up, how others, or "we" show up in the system together, and finally how "we" make decisions together to become "us."

Slide #7

Creating safe space for humans involves the care and cultivation of the "Relationship of Me." Later in today's session we're going to engage with two concepts that are key to caring for and cultivating the "Relationship of Me" – the Brain Science of Belonging & Adult Social Emotional Learning (SEL). Each person here will improve your relationships with others by knowing how your own brain chemistry and learning works. By understanding yourself, or "me," you can better understand and create relationships with others.

Pause and prompt: Any questions?

HELPFUL TIP

Take your time going through these slides to make sure corps members understand the difference between me, we, and us.

Slide #8

Today we will also discover how to foster Developmental Relationships that can support our efforts to build strong relationships with others – from the colleagues and staff who we stand in solidarity with to those we serve. Understanding others and our relationships with others, is how we start to build the "we." In other words: "me" + others equals "we."

Pause and prompt: Any questions?

Slide #9

In this journey, we move from cultivating the “Relationship of Me” to caring for the “Relationship of We,” so that ultimately, “the we” can get to a place where we are caring for and cultivating the “Relationship of Us.”

The transition from “we” to “us” requires the collective “we” to set up a system where everyone benefits – it is not just a collection of “me” individuals, but an understanding of what “we” all need. That’s the final step in our journey to fostering a “Relationship of Us.” This collective well-being – the “us” – requires an authentic expression of who each of us truly is.

Throughout today’s session, we can begin to understand why developing a sense of belonging is essential to cultivating safe spaces and how that is centered in our brain development.

Pause and prompt: Any questions?

Slide #10

Before we talk about the brain science of belonging, let’s look at this figure. This pyramid outlines what is necessary in order to create safe spaces for youth where humans are affirmed. While this figure may be focused on youth specifically, it is important that we keep top of mind our shared connection as humans. As human beings there is one affinity or experience that we have all shared – we have all been youth at some point.

As such, understanding youth development, and what it takes to create safe spaces for youth, teaches us about who we are and gives us the tools to create safe spaces for all of us. The foundation that this pyramid establishes is a safe environment. We all need to feel physical and psychological safety – whether that’s emotional, identity-based, or intellectual safety. We need to thrive in a low-risk environment, absent of harmful, oppressive micro-aggressions, where we can feel that we are safe, affirmed, and seen.

It’s important to establish that safety does not mean the absence of the possibility of harm – as humans we are all capable of harming each other intentionally or unintentionally. Safety, in the context of how we will use it in our sessions, means prioritizing a response to harm with restoration, reconciliation or remembering, and accountability. In the two tiers right above “supportive environments” and “interaction” tiers we want to create connectedness and supports in our spaces.

To accomplish this, positive relationships, meaningful connections, cultural respect, responsiveness, care, collaboration, and inclusivity must be centered characteristics of the spaces we create. The final tier, at the top of the pyramid, establishes we need to create spaces where we are fully able to engage. If we want to have full engagement, we must center the lived experiences of those proximate to us by planning with them, not for them, and by offering choice within structures. Furthermore, creating time for reflection and practicing active learning helps us make meaning and sense of the world around us. This is what we want for the spaces and experiences we create – and it must be built by all of us.

In order to get there, we must first understand the individual brain science of belonging.

Pause and prompt: Any questions?

Slide #11

Let's move on to the brain science of belonging.

Slide #12

All brains come with a default setting that acts as its prime directive regardless of race, class, language, or culture: "Avoid threats to safety at all costs and seek well-being at every opportunity."

That's how all brains are wired. Avoid threats to safety and seek well-being at every opportunity. Remember when we talked about safety, we didn't say safety is the absence of harm because we're dealing with humans. Humans make mistakes and, unfortunately, humans harm each other. You can step on a toe in two seconds, right? Safety is not the absence of the potential of harm. Safety is the presence of an ethos that says when harm is happening, or when harm happens, it is our top priority to reconcile, repair, and restore. When we speak of safety, we often think of physical safety and we don't always think about psychological safety, or psycho-spiritual safety. Psycho-spiritual safety is my emotions, identity, and intellect. How are we keeping all of "me" safe in those spaces as well? And, how does the brain process these things? Let's dive into the fascinating and complex parts of all human brains.

Slide #13

Let's talk about the brain. There are three areas of the brain – the Reptilian Region, the Limbic System, and the Cortex.

- The reptilian region of the brain is the instinctual behavior part of our brain. That's where we get our primal instincts and reactions.
- The limbic system is where our emotional behavior, and the artifacts connected to our emotional behaviors, are stored.
- Finally, the cortex is where our intellectual capacity is stored. This supports our intellectual tasks.

Today we will focus most closely on the reptilian and limbic regions as these are the instinctual and emotional response centers in our brain. Who's ready for some brain science?

Slide #14

We'll start with the reptilian region. The reptilian region is also referred to as the "reptilian brain" because it has two portions, the brainstem and the cerebellum, and those two parts together, look like the brain of a reptile.

A few of the key things to know about the reptilian brain:

1. It is the instinctual center of your brain, meaning that it doesn't think, it only reacts.
2. The reptilian brain is always on, even during your sleep.
3. There is a system that's housed in the reptilian brain called the Reticular Activating System which is your natural scanning and alarm system.

Have you ever had an annoying relative or sibling that messed with you while you were sleeping? They might put a finger near your nose or attempt to touch your face while you slept. If so, think back to that experience. How did you know they were there? You felt them because your Reticular Activating System (RAS) was hard at work scanning your environment for changes or threats. The RAS looks for relevant events or information that might signal a threat or reward. If you've ever woken up to the smell of your favorite baked goods, coffee, or bacon, that was your RAS working as well.

Those are the basics about your reptilian brain and how it behaves.

We'll dig into the limbic system next which is a bit more complex. Any questions about the reptilian region before we move on?

Slide #15

Let's jump into our limbic region. The key things to know about our limbic region are:

1. It links our emotions, our behavior, and our cognition together.
2. It records memories of experiences.
3. It records behaviors that produce positive and negative results in the past.
4. It signals to us threats to avoid and rewards to pursue.

Have you ever noticed that sometimes when you are recounting a long, difficult day, you start feeling the emotions that you felt on that day, even when the day may have been weeks or months before? That's because emotions are part of our memory. That's all packaged together in the limbic region of your brain. This speaks to the power of our stories. There are three specific structures that are housed in the limbic region: the Thalamus, the Hippocampus, and the Amygdala.

Slide #16

The first structure of the limbic region is the Thalamus. The Thalamus behaves as the brain's communication dispatch hub. It takes incoming sensory information and directs it to the other parts of the brain depending on the incoming sensory information.

Slide #17

The second structure of the limbic region is the Hippocampus. The Hippocampus serves as the background knowledge data bank. It houses short-term memory, working memory, and long-term memory. Short-term memory is what has happened in the last 30 seconds, and working memory is what has happened between 30 seconds to 30 minutes ago. Long-term memory houses memories from days, months, years, or decades ago. For some of us, our storage is pretty powerful. Some of us can remember what outfit we wore on our 12th birthday. Others of us, we can't remember what we ate yesterday. So how we store and access information can differ.

The storage of memories is what you remember, and how you remember relating to the engagement in these moments. Where we store these memories is also connected in the same part of your brain as your emotions and your behavior.

To reiterate: the storage of your memories and how you engage in spaces – how you were received, how you were welcomed – is all stored in the same part of your brain as your emotions and your behavior. That's why our memories are packed with emotions.

Slide #18

The final structure of the Limbic Region, the Amygdala, is very important. The Amygdala serves as the brain's watchdog. It reacts in less than a second to the hint of social or physical threat.

The minute we feel like something's wrong, whether it's a social or a physical threat, our Amygdala reacts. This is a very powerful component of our brain and controls how we feel about situations.

Slide #19

When the Amygdala reacts, it does something called an amygdala hijack. So what is a hijack? The amygdala has the authority to bypass the thalamus – the communication dispatch that we talked about – and send distress signals directly to the reptilian brain in the form of the stress hormone cortisol. Remember: the reptilian brain doesn't think, it only reacts. That bypass is what we call an amygdala hijack.

Many of us are familiar with our fight or flight instincts. Fight - I'm going to stay and resist the harmful or dangerous conditions, but at what cost? Or Flight - if there's some danger, I'm going to run away or leave the space.

But there are two other brain functions that are just as important for us to understand - freeze and appease - and they are just as dangerous.

Freeze is where you stop being able to engage with the space contextually – you're disconnected. The presence of the harmful conditions and danger has backed us into a space where we cannot engage authentically.

And, Appease - which may be the most dangerous. This is where, because of the fear of harm, you become whatever the situation calls for. For example, if you're afraid to be your authentic self, because you're afraid you might be harmed, you instead become whatever the situation wants you to be. You appease whatever the request is – even if it is not indigenous to your own identity.

It is important to understand that there are four ways the hijack can lead us: fight, flight, freeze, or appease. Each with their own costs to our system. When the amygdala hijack happens, we are incapable of cognitive functions, such as learning, problem solving, or creative thinking. Our Cortex is totally cut off and we're just responding to the context and the content.

Having a basic understanding of the limbic region and how an amygdala hijack works gives us context to some of the things we've experienced and will experience moving forward.

With our colleagues, for example, some of us may have taken moments that we attributed to someone being good or bad, or being a good friend or a bad friend, not realizing that we were witnessing someone experiencing an amygdala hijack where they were incapable of cognitive functions.

Slide #20

It is very important for us to understand the amygdala hijack because if the environment is unwelcoming, the brain doesn't produce enough serotonin and begins to produce cortisol which signals anxiety. The anxiety triggers the reptilian brain, making one think they are in danger because the brain doesn't experience a sense of community.

Let that sink in. The amygdala hijack is responsible for how we react in unwelcoming environments – the same way we'd react if we were in danger of a physical threat.

Slide #21

This is why it is imperative to understand how to build positive social relationships that signal to the brain a sense of physical, psychological, and social safety so that learning and belonging is possible.

Slide #22

Creating a sense of belonging and affirming the fullness of identity supports learning. This is where understanding the brain science we reviewed today gives us better clarity of our "Relationship of Me." And ties into the previous session of values, identity, and community agreements. If we can show up as ourselves, with our values and identity, then each of us can come together as the "we" and together, build an "us."



Slide #23

We will break into pairs for this next activity. In your pair, you will have 10 minutes to answer/talk about both of these prompts. We will come back together and ask people to share, if they'd like, and then we'll take a five minute break.

First, think back to a time in your life or career when you may have been witnessing a child or colleague experiencing an Amygdala Hijack. What occurred? How was the situation de-escalated?

Second, what does this situation teach you about the power of re-humanizing our spaces to create a sense of belonging for human beings? Re-humanize refers to centering our human selves – and the relationships of me, we, and us – into the way we interact with each other.

Set a timer for 10 minutes. After 10 minutes or when folks are done, prompt a group conversation: Would anyone like to share an experience from the first prompt? And what about the second prompt? Any remaining things to share?



Virtual modification: If virtual, you can have everyone reflect individually by journaling.

Slide #24

Give the group a 5 minute break to stretch and refocus.

Slide #25

Bring the group back together.

We just spent the first part of today's session understanding how our brain works; and that the absence of learning happens when there is an amygdala hijack from an unwelcoming environment. But when your brain is not hijacked, how does learning work for humans?

Before we jump into Adult Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and its relationship with belonging, it is important we take the time to understand how our learning centers develop from our youth.

Slide #26

Creating safe spaces for humans involves establishing a culture of belonging. Culture is how we exist in – and make meaning within – a community. Developing or shifting culture involves the development of a learning ecosystem where we learn new ways of being. As such, an examination of the ecological models that highlight how and where we learn becomes essential to us learning new ways of being that help establish safety for ourselves and others in the communities we serve.

This is most easily seen by examining how children learn. As we stated earlier in this session, there is one affinity or experience that we have all shared – we have all been children, or youth. And we have all learned through systems as we grew.

Slide #27

Let's use an ecological model to look at how we learn. Ecological models "recognize multiple levels of influence on health behaviors, including intrapersonal and individual factors, which influence behavior such as knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and personality.

First, let's take a second and name this child. You can name them after someone you know and love. It will help us to remain tethered to our shared humanity by linking them to a real person.

This little human learns from all these spaces. Learning is happening at home, school, community libraries, museums, online, at businesses. They learn when they walk into a business and they're followed around the business, or when they walk into a business and they recognize they don't have the resources to get what they need in that space. They're learning from secondary and higher education through direct interaction and by proxy through those that serve them – whether they were trained in higher education or adopt the practices developed in those spaces. Learning is happening! We know that this little human is learning in all these spaces, developing not only concepts of how they see the world, or how the world sees them, but they're also developing concepts and constructs based on how they see themselves.

That's the first thing we need to learn about this ecological model. Learning is always happening; it is happening in all these spaces and at all times. This little human is not only learning in these spaces, but they're also learning in specific systems.

Slide #28

As you can see on the model, children learn in Mesosystems like their family, the classroom, religious settings, and peer groups. Each of these systems are outside of their control. Youth are being impacted and learning in all of these systems at the same time, and every young person engages and learns in the systems differently. You may have a little human that seems to be very mature in the ways that they engage in a particular mesosystem, such as the classroom, but they may not exhibit that same maturity when it comes to their peer group – making immature decisions.

When you look at yourself when you were a child, you were learning from your family. At the same time you may have been learning in your religious setting. You were learning from your peer group at the same time you learned in your classroom.

This Ecological Model helps us to remember:

1. that children are developing and learning in all of these spaces at the same time; and
2. that there's not one way they learn.

Some youth will learn from some systems and grow in those systems at a greater rate than they do in others. Bringing this together with the brain science and the amygdala hijack, each of these systems has the potential to be welcoming or unwelcoming and affect how we respond and show up in them. If the mesosystems are welcoming, then we are set up for cognitive functions, such as learning, problem solving, or creative thinking. But if any of these systems are unwelcoming – and imagine if most of these systems are unwelcoming – then our amygdala hijack happens and instead of our cognitive systems being present, we feel fight, flight, freeze, or appease.

We didn't stop learning in these systems and spaces when we became adults. Our status as adults provided us the opportunity to act upon these spaces and systems in ways we could not do as a child.

Pause and prompt: any questions? What resonates about all of this?

Slide #29

Before we left for break, we spoke about the fact that creating a safe space for humans involves the care and cultivation of the "Relationship of Me." In this portion of our session, we're going to discuss Adult Social Emotional Learning and how it builds our competencies to help us create safe spaces for ourselves and others.

Slide #30

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is the process of developing and applying the skills, attitudes, and knowledge that help youth and adults to:

1. identify and regulate emotions;
2. develop positive relationships; and
3. make responsible decisions.

So basically, SEL is the process of developing systems set up to create safe spaces for ourselves and others.

Slide #31

So how is adult SEL different? Adult SEL is about the process of helping adults build their expertise and skills to support social and emotional learning in other adults and youth. To do that, adults also need to cultivate their own social and emotional competencies. The process gives them the ability to positively model prosocial behaviors, label emotions, and demonstrate empathy, positive relationships, social awareness, and self-awareness. In understanding the process to model, this helps adults themselves set up self-care practices to cope with stress and manage their emotions. If adults are equipped with social and emotional learning practices, then they are better able to help other adults and youth.

Slide #32

So why is SEL important? It is important because in identifying and regulating emotions, developing positive relationships, and making responsible decisions, it allows us to:

1. recognize and build upon strengths/assets;
2. engage in respectful dialogue;
3. resolve conflict peacefully;
4. deeply engage with challenging content; and
5. advocate for ourselves, our families, and our communities.

Slide #33

There are five key competencies connected to social emotional learning.

1. The first one is self awareness, recognizing one's own feelings, interests, strengths and limitations.
2. The second is self-management. How do I regulate emotions and manage daily stresses? What tools do I use? What supports do I need?
3. The third is social awareness, or taking others' perspectives and appreciating similarities and differences. We may have differences of opinion, we may have differences of understanding, but how am I socially aware of these differences?
4. The fourth competency is huge: relationship skills. How do I exhibit prosocial behavior and demonstrate positive social skills in order to develop meaningful relationships?
5. And then the final competency connected to social emotional learning is responsible decision making. How do I make ethical decisions and strengthen my ability to develop appropriate solutions to identified problems?

We must recognize that we are human first, and in that recognition and acknowledgment, we must manage ourselves to care for ourselves. If you have ever flown in a plane, you may recall a flight attendant instructing you to put your oxygen mask on first before you assist others in case of an emergency. This instruction works here as well. I must provide care for myself first, as a foundational need, and then build relationships with others.

Pause and prompt for reflection: Take a moment to think about which competency you are professionally strongest in? Which one is a growth area?

Slide #34

So, how does this all come together? We understand the brain science of how we react in safe or unsafe spaces. We see how we learn from all of our mesosystems. And now we comprehend social and emotional learning. What are the connection points? What is the most important thing we each can do as adults to create safe spaces?

Pause and prompt the group to say a few answers out loud. Be prepared to share your own thoughts on these questions first if nobody initially volunteers to share out.

Understand that if we can all come into systems, understand ourselves, and understand our “Relationship to Me,” then we have the capacity to understand others. But if we do not understand how we come into systems and how we affect those systems, then it is difficult to be a positive force for others to show up the way you need them. You have to show up how you want others to show up for you, but at the same time if you show up and others create an unsafe space, then you must do what you need to take care of yourself first. Creating a safe space is about a group of “we” being committed to create conditions so we become an “us” where everyone can succeed.

Slide #35

Up to this point, we have been focused on understanding ourselves and our development to build the “Relationship of Me.” Now we will be turning to how “me” can shift to “we.”

Slide #36

Developmental relationships are close connections through which people discover who they are, cultivate abilities to shape their own lives, and learn how to engage with and contribute to the world around them. These are the ways that we go from just “me” to “we.”

There are five main elements of developmental relationships:

- Express care
- Challenge growth
- Provide support
- Share power, and
- Expand possibilities

Slide #37



We are going to take the next 5 minutes to review the “20 Specific Actions That Make Relationships Powerful” on this slide and on your worksheet. After reading through these, write the action(s) that you’d like to begin using in your relationships on the worksheet below. Also, take note of the actions you already feel are your strengths and which ones you need to work on.

Give 5 minutes for everyone to read through these.

Slide #38

Let’s bring together what we just learned, we are going to break into pairs. In your pairs, you are going to get 10 minutes to answer the two prompts together.

First prompt: When you think about the best relationships (regardless of type) you ever had, what did they have in common? We say regardless of type because this could be a friend relationship, family relationship, work relationship, romantic relationship, etc.

The second prompt: What were the key characteristics or traits of the best relationships mentioned in prompt one? You have 10 minutes to discuss.

After 10 minutes or before if people are done early. Who would like to share? Do we see any themes from the people who have shared? Does this resonate with others?

Virtual modification: If virtual, you can have everyone reflect individually by journaling.

Slide #39

We are approaching the end of today's session but before we end, let's close out our conversation. How might we use today's information, and the relationship of "me" and "we" to build a "Relationship of Us" to create safe spaces?



Use the chat box for virtual sessions.

Slide #40

Thank you for exploring today how to create safe spaces through understanding ourselves and how we can come together as us. We learned a lot about the brain science of belonging, how we can support our own social and emotional learning, and how that feeds into our developmental relationships. All of this allows each of us to be part of creating a safe space.

Before we close out, take a few minutes to journal on this question. How can you contribute to creating a safe space for our group/team and for the community members you work with?